

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES

Date: April 26, 2022

Time: 10:00am

Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard members Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie. Also present in-person for parts of the meeting were Board of Health Chair Chuck Ogden and Road Superintendent James Noe. Present via zoom were Alison Dixon(Housatonic Valley Association), Doug Mishkin, Fred Gordon, Mary McGurn, Pat, Richard Allen, Rebecca Turner, Peg McDonough, James, Ronnie Sacco, Susan Bachelder.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the April 6, 2022, April 12, 2022 and April 14, 2022 meetings were accepted as presented.

SCHEDULED ITEMS:

At 10:03 am the hearing was called to order on the application of the Egremont Village Inn to alter the described location of service to include an outdoor area under the overhang at The Barn and in front of the barn where the picnic tables. This area has been utilized under special allowance by Governor Baker during the pandemic. The Board voted unanimously to approve the application and forward to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission for final approval. Hearing closed at 10:05am.

Alison Dixon, Housatonic Valley Association(HVA), presented the Road-Stream Crossing Management Plan for the Town's 31 bridges and culverts. Egremont has 25 miles of streams/rivers, 64 miles of road. In a shared screen power point presentation she said the HVA inventoried every stream crossing a roadway, gave each location a flood risk analysis, and prioritized the urgency for remediation. HVA can move forward with design development on one location. Shun Toll Road was identified as the number 1 priority but does not meet the goals of the grant program, so a Blunt Road culvert was chosen for replacement. HVA is seeking funding for the Blunt Road project in the amount of \$26,000 and HVA will put up \$5,000. The Town can use in-kind support. Road Superintendent Jim Noe and the Conservation Commission have had input in the process, as have other town boards. The draft will be distributed to Egremont citizens and other town officials for comment. The Board has a month to adopt it.

TOWN OFFICIALS:

Richard Allen, Friends of French Park Trust, announced that they have a bid for the pickle ball courts. This will be place on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Lucinda Vermeulen spoke about the many contributions to the Town made by the recently passed Wendy Linscott.

George McGurn spoke about the many contributions to the Town made by the recently passed Chet Delaney.

COVID-19:

Board of Health Chairman Chuck Ogden presented the Board of Health's COVID Mitigation Plan. The plan is modeled after one being used by other towns in Berkshire County giving a 3 tiered color risk assessment and will mirror the risk level the Commonwealth puts on an area when COVID cases reach a certain number. Currently Berkshire County is in Yellow, which would put Egremont in Yellow though there is no data as to the number of Egremont cases. (See attached). The Board agreed the plan was a good one, but wants to continue with public attendance at meetings via zoom for the time being no matter the risk level is.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Board unanimously approved the carry over of 5 days vacation paid time off for a police officer as allowed by the Police Union Contract.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman McGurn reported on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) draft approval of the Mount Washington Road reconstruction project being moved to an FY 2026 from an FY 2027 implementation. The fact that the very steep roadbed is deteriorating is of concern. There may be the possibility of \$1,000,000 left in the TIP program for funding to make temporary repairs to this area. Also on the TIP program is the reconstruction of Rte 23/41 in South Egremont for the FY 2023. Chairman McGurn complimented the team effort that got this project on the TIP schedule as it is a very complex and political process.

Housing Committee members Fred Gordon and Doug Mishkin explained that the request for proposals (RFP) for the affordable/workforce housing project has been amended to include the necessary dates and a time line for publication has been laid out. Section IV regarding the Town's application for \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 in funding for site preparation and infrastructure remains in the RFP pending the Board's decision on the proposed grant application to MassWorks. The RFP is intended to test the market. Selectboard member Brazie still is unsure if a grant application can be filed without some form of approval of a project being developed on town land and if the town won't be the actual developer. These questions will be presented to legal counsel and the Board will discuss again on May 10.

The Be Safe Be Seen vest distribution kiosks are completed.

The Board is concerned that the Council on Aging's proposal to recognize current Town Officials who served a minimum of 10 years has gotten too rigid and cumbersome and that a large plaque in Town Hall is too bureaucratic. It may be best to just allow the COA, and other Town Boards, to recognize who they feel is appropriate.

Ronnie Sacco presented another draft of verbiage for rules and signage at the French Park Dog Park. She also reported on issues with the donations account that are being ironed out. It was agreed that the French Park Dog Park Committee will only come back to the Board when they have final recommendations.

GRANTS:

Peg McDonough reported that the funds in the Community Health Inclusion grant may be expended for wetlands expertise, legal fees and possibly a survey of French Park. Though some seem to think that looking at access to Prospect Lake at the gap is fruitless and the CHI Committee is spinning its wheels the fact is that the gap has been a well used access for many years and continue to be so even if other means of access is found. As there has been talk over the years of creating parking at the very edge of French Park near the gap at the lake, a survey of the land, which will benefit the Forest

Management Plan and the Forest Stewardship program would be a good use of the funds. Concerns over a delay in getting a surveyor were allayed because as long as the funds are committed they can carry over past June 30, 2022. The Committee is also working with the Police Chief on some traffic safety measures. The Committee has done its job in inquiring, working with property owners and town counsel. There may be a prescriptive easement allowing access. The property owner is looking at how to proceed.

Peg McDonough said the Mass Trail Grant for French Park is a reimbursable grant that can reimburse the town for invasive plant removal already done, bridge repairs, and work on the trails.

FOLLOW UPS:

The Town of Mount Washington has hired Berkshire Regional Planning Committee (BRPC) to look at the Fire Service Agreement and the way Egremont assesses the service fee to Mount Washington. Ken Walto has been contracted by BRPC and has met with Chairman McGurn, Finance Committee Chair Allen, Fire Chief Schneider and Office Administrator Brazie to gather information. Egremont held firmly to the stance that it will assess Mount Washington for fire services in the same way the Town's total Fire Department budget has been calculated, including equipment debt service, and not on a depreciation schedule of some sort. The Board voted unanimously to issue a demand letter to Mount Washington as they are in violation of Section 12 of the agreement "User Fee" because they have not paid the full fee assessed for FY 2022.

TOWN MEETING:

The Board approved the motions for special articles as proposed by Office Administrator Brazie and agreed to take turns making motions that are not delegated to other town department heads.

SELECTMEN'S ITEMS:

Historical Commission Chair Rebecca Turner and resident Susan Bachelder presented a request to seek funding in conjunction with the Egremont Land Trust for a garden in the back of the Library for a children's educational area as well as plantings around the new handicapped ramp. The Board requested concern that the Library Trustees and Buildings & Grounds be involved and that the garden not interfere with any parking as the parking area is already limited. The Board voted unanimously to support the Historical Commission and Library Trustees application for a grant from Emerson Collective's Community & School Garden Special Initiative.

The next regular meeting of the Board will be Tuesday, May 10, 2022, at 10:00am

Meeting adjourned at 12:05pm.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.22/apr26

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.